

West San Carlos Workshop #2 Summary

The second community workshop for the West San Carlos Urban Village was held on September 23, 2013, at Sherman Oaks Community Center, with more than 80 community members participating. The input from the first meeting (held on October, 29th, 2012) helped inform the creation of draft concepts relating to urban design, land use, parks/public art, circulation, and streetscape. These draft concepts were presented to the community at this second meeting in order to receive further community comments prior to the development of the Draft Urban Village Plan document.

The workshop began with a welcome followed by background information of the Urban Village planning process and steps taken since the previous workshop. The speakers for the workshop included both City staff and the staff from MIG, the project's consultants. This introduction was followed by a PowerPoint presentation on the overall vision, issues and opportunities, urban design, land use, parks/public art, circulation, and streetscape.

Following this PowerPoint presentation, the group of 80+ community members was split up evenly into two groups for breakout sessions on the presented material. These breakout sessions were more question-and-answer in format and key slides from the presentation were blown up on posters to provide reference material. This breakout session portion of the workshop consisted of one group going into another room to discuss the draft urban design, land use and parks/art concepts, with the other group going to another room to discuss the draft circulation and streetscape concepts. After roughly 45 minutes of dialogue, the two groups switched to discuss the other topics.

After these two sessions took place, the workshop participants regrouped to for an overview of the key takeaways that came from these discussions. Below are the main points the community made about each of the topics:

Urban Design

- Attention must be paid to the height transition from new development along West San Carlos to the adjacent neighborhoods
- Design guidelines should include architectural themes that provide identity to the corridor (two main styles are mid-century modern and early 1900's craftsman)
- Buildings should have setbacks or dedicate land in order to widen sidewalks
- Gateways should be designed in such a way that people are welcomed to the corridor and neighborhood

Land Use

- The Character Areas as shown are a good way of organizing the Urban Village
- Areas designated Residential Neighborhood adjacent to South Bascom in the land use plan should be taken out of the Village.
- Commercial uses along West San Carlos should not only be maintained, but new commercial uses and activity added to the corridor.
- Within the Mixed-Use Residential Character Area, new development should include ground floor retail for a consistent retail street frontage along the corridor.
- Larger office development should be placed close to the highway in order to decrease neighborhood impacts
- The community raised some concerns regarding the intensity of development on the eastern portion of the Urban Village

Parks

- The western portion of the West San Carlos Urban Village is especially park-deficient
- San Jose must come up with strategies to increase the amount of park space in this area
- The community was generally supportive of the proposed locations of park facilities especially the green paseos between the new housing development and existing neighborhoods on the eastern portion of the plan area
- Paseos behind major developments would be important community spaces and provide buffer between neighborhood so they should be included wherever possible
- Native vegetation should exist wherever possible to decrease water use and provide identity
- Aside from more traditional parks, plazas and other smaller gathering spaces are also welcomed in the neighborhood
- Participants expresses interest in and support for spaces for farmers markets and community gardens are of interest
- When tree planting, consider the neighborhood's fruit tree heritage
- The community would like to have park facilities for all ages: besides playgrounds, exercise equipments for adults may be provided.

Public Art

- The historic signs along West San Carlos should be preserved and their character should be reflected in new signage
- Public art along West San Carlos should be distinctive and maintain the "quirk" of the area
- Art should be integrated with parks and consider artwork that is interactive/educational
- Artwork should be at different scales and incorporated into a variety of Urban Village elements (streetscapes, parks, private development, stormwater management, etc.)

Circulation

- The community supports midblock crossings due to lack of north-south accessibility along the West San Carlos corridor. Participants suggested exploring mid-block crossings at a number of locations along West San Carlos including between: Meridian and Race, Race and Lincoln, Lincoln and Sunol, and Willard and Page.
- Creating safer north-south connections is important to the community to provide safe routes to schools. Many of the students within the Buena Vista neighborhood, south of West San Carlos, attend Lincoln High School and need improved pedestrian street crossings along West San Carlos to walk to school. To serve these students an enhanced crosswalk was suggested at Willard Avenue and Dana. To provide better pedestrian access for students from Luther Burbank Elementary who live south of West San Carlos, participants were supportive of the proposed enhanced crosswalk at Leland Avenue.
- Additional locations where enhance crosswalks/intersections should be explored include the intersections of West San Carlos and Di Salvo, MacArthur, Bradley, Richmond and Dana.
- Parking along West San Carlos should remain and new development should provide enough parking to prevent overflow into the adjacent neighborhoods.

- The Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system along West San Carlos should provide good connections to key destinations including Diridon Station, the Airport and the future Berryessa BART station
- Participants recommend locating a BRT bus stop adjacent to the Buena Vista Neighborhood. Some participants recommend locating this bus stop near Meridian, while others thought that the bus stop should be located farther west, adjacent to the West San Carlos Shopping Center between Shasta and Dana.
- A number of participants suggested locating a BRT stop adjacent to Sunol Street, to provide a good connection to the planned light rail station just south of this intersection.
- Participants expressed strong support for improving bike connections within the West San Carlos Urban Village as well as to key destinations surrounding the Village.
- Participants express support for the Scott Street bike route, but wanted this bike route completed as soon as possible. One participant suggested moving the cross street stop bars painted on the street to minimize potential conflicts with bicyclists on Scott Street and motorists crossing or entering Scott Street.
- If the bikeway does go south from West San Carlos to Scott street along MacArthur, it is important to note that MacArthur is a busy street so the bikeway along it must be well-designed
- The Douglas Street connection of the proposed east-west Scott Street bike route was identified as needing lighting and other improvements to enhance bicycle and pedestrian safety.
- To improve east-west bicycle connections along the Scott Street corridor, it was suggested that a new traffic signal be installed at Douglas and Meridian; with this installation the existing signal at Meridian and Auzerais was thought not to be needed by participants and should be explored for removal.
- A formal bike lane needs to be installed at O'Connor Park(Saddle Rack Park) connecting the two dead ends of Auzerais Avenue and providing a better east-west connection for the Scott Street bicycle route.
- Installing bike lanes along Park Street between Race and Sunol was suggested as another way to improve access from the West San Carlos area to Downtown.
- A participant said that Moorpark and the I280 bike and pedestrian overpass, located just west of the I-280 and 880 interchange is a better connection for the West San Carlos Area to Santana Row than MacArthur and that enhancing this connection should be explored by adding bike lanes along Moorpark.
- Participants expressed concern about cut-through traffic along MacArthur Avenue, Bellerose Drive and Bailey Avenue.

Streetscape

- Providing shade to pedestrians through street trees is vital. The trees selected along West San Carlos should be of a variety that provides a wide canopy of shade.
- Pedestrians need better lighting along the West San Carlos sidewalks and drivers need better street lighting too
- Sidewalk cafes and parklets should be incorporated into the streetscape
- Overall participants were supportive of the streetscape design concepts
- Participants expressed concern about exploring a road diet between Parkmoor and West San Carlos.